

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 260941Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE IMMEDIATE 7079

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 1051

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:OVIP (SECTREAS SIMON), PFOR,JO,US

SUBJECT: AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE

REF: STATE 045774

1. I SAW PRIME MINISTER RIFAI MORNING FEBRUARY 26. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO APPROACH HIM IN CONNECTION WITH AN OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCE FOR THE AIRCRAFT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY WHO WAS VISITING THE AREA. THE CLEARANCE HAD BEEN REFUSED BY OFFICERS AT THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE RJAF AND I WANTED TO ASK HIM TO RECONSIDER IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VISIT AND THE HIGH LEVEL OF THE VISITOR. JORDAN WAS ON HIS MOST DIRECT ROUTE BETWEEN STOPS.

2. BEFORE I HAD TIME TO FINISH MY PRESENTATION RIFAI SNAPPED BACK, YES THAT IS RIGHT. I HAVE BEEN CONSULTED AND I MADE THE DECISION. THE ANSWER WILL CONTINUE TO BE NO, UNLESS THE SECRETARY CARES TO VISIT US ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA. WE AT FIRST THOUGHT HE WAS VISITING ONLY THE WEALTHY COUNTRIES, BUT SINCE HE IS GOING TO SYRIA, THAT CANNOT BE TRUE. I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO WELCOME HIM IN JORDAN. WE ALSO KNOW, HE CONTINUED THAT THE SAUDIS WILL NOT LET HIM FLY DIRECTLY FROM RIYADH TO ISRAEL AND THAT THE SYRIANS WILL NOT PERMIT A DIRECT FLIGHT FROM DAMASCUS TO ISRAEL. WHY SHOULD WE, THE ONLY STATE HE IS NOT VISITING, BE CALLED UPON TO DO WHAT OUR ARAB FRIENDS DO NOT WANT TO PERMIT. IF HE WANTS TO DO THAT WHY NOT FLY OVER EGYPT AND LEBANON TO MAKE THE CONNECTION.

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3. WHEN I POINTED OUT TO RIFAI THAT OTHER HIGH LEVEL AMERICANS HAD MADE NUMEROUS FLIGHTS OVER JORDAN WITHOUT A STOP OVER ON THE DIRECT ROUTE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ARAB STATES, INCLUDING THE SECRETARY, RIFAI RESPONDED QUICKLY THAT IT WAS NEVER THE CASE THAT THE SECRETARY CAME TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND MADE SUCH FLIGHTS WITHOUT STOPPING OFF AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE TRIP IN JORDAN. (TO THE BEST OF OUR RECOLLECTION LOCALLY, THIS IS TRUE).

4. JORDANIANS ARE ALREADY MIFFED THAT SECRETARY SIMON NOT STOPPING HERE. IF HE WISHED TO STOP OVER, EVEN ON SHORT NOTICE, I AM SURE RIFAI IS SERIOUS IN WANTING TO WELCOME HIM, EVEN THOUGH THE DECISION IS A RATHER BELATED ONE. THIS OF COURSE WOULD ALSO FACILITATE THE OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCE. I SEE NO OTHER ARGUMENTS TO ADVANCE HERE, BUT WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE ANOTHER TRY IF DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THERE ARE ANY OTHER POINTS WHICH CAN BE EFFECTIVE IN CHANGING JORDANIAN VIEWS. AT THIS POINT, RIFAI IS ABOUT AS DUG IN AS I HAVE SEEN HIM AND MY PREDICTIONS FOR SUCCESS ARE PESSIMISTIC TO SAY THE LEAST.  
PICKERING

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